

Pequot School
214 Main Street
Southport
Fairfield County
Connecticut

HABS No. CONN-320

HABS
CONN,
1-SOUPO.
28-

PHOTOGRAPH

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. CONN-320

PEQUOT SCHOOL

Location; 214 Main Street (northwest side of street), Southport,
Fairfield County, Connecticut

USGS Westport Quadrangle Map; Universal Transverse
Mercator Coordinates: 18.64400.4554800

Present Owner
and Occupant: Pequot Public School

Present Use: School classrooms

Statement of
Significance: The Pequot School was built in 1917-18 and is one of only a few institutional buildings erected in Southport during the early twentieth century. Because of its principal use as an elementary school, a functional, utilitarian design for the interior was necessary. Second to this, however, was the desire for a structure with architectural interest; thus an exterior facade styled in the Neo-Classical manner. Characteristic of early twentieth-century Neo-Classicism, the structure is composed of rectangular sections, the main street facade is symmetrical about the central doorway, deep wooden eaves of classical design are supported by thin brackets, and an octagonal cupola is centered atop the principal roof ridge.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1917-18.
2. Architect: W. H. McLean.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Pequot Public School has been the sole owner of the building and the land upon which it stands since the building was erected in 1917-18.
4. Original plan and construction: This one-story structure is U-shaped with the principal facade facing Main Street (southeast). Measuring one-hundred ten feet (front southeast elevation) by one-hundred sixty feet, the building is constructed of buff brick with one-half inch recessed mortar joints. The gable roof of each of the sections of the U-shaped mass is

covered with glazed green clay tiles, projecting beyond the wall surface to create deep wooden eaves of classical design. On each principal facade the roof overhang is supported by thin brackets and four evenly-spaced corbelled consoles molded in a scroll motif. A wooden octagonal cupola - concealing ventilation machinery - sits atop the ridge at the center of the front (southeast) section. The principal entrance is on the street facade, placed symmetrically at the center of this elevation. Two common variety commercial wooden doors surrounded by simple classical molding of cement are topped by an ornate plaque. Directly above the doorway is a plaque with "Pequot School" inscribed. A dentiled cornice supported by two scrolled consoles is crowned by a highly ornate plaque with the profile of a Pequot Indian at the center. The symmetrical design of the front facade dictates that each member flanking the central doorway is repeated on the opposite side of the opening. Large three-quarter length double-hung sash windows with dark buff-brick surrounds pierce the seven bays at each side.

The interior is divided into classroom wings in the southeastern and northwestern sections of the U-shaped mass, and a gymnasium/auditorium space is at the center. Because of practical considerations, wooden surfaces are plainly appointed.

B. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

As a result of an increase in the number of school age children living in Southport, the building of a new and large school was proposed to the school board in 1916. During the fall semester, 1917, space for school rooms was at such a high premium additional classes were held in the Sherwood and Banks' Buildings, and at Trinity Church. The Town School Committee reported on September, 1917; "In the handsome and convenient schoolhouses now fast nearing completion in Southport, Holland Hill and near the Bridgeport line, your town has taken a new departure in building. Not only will these structures amply accomodate the children, but as modern thought demands commodious assembly rooms in these schools will furnish rallying points for social movements." The classical brick building was opened for classes in January 1918.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: None.

2. Bibliography:

- a. Primary and unpublished sources: None.
- b. Secondary and published sources:

Banks, Elizabeth. This is Fairfield, 1639-1940.
New Haven: Walker-Rackliff Co., 1960.

Prepared by Jan E. Cigliano
Staff Historian
Historic American
Buildings Survey
January 1979

PART II. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey in cooperation with the Southport Historic District Commission, several members of whom provided the necessary funds. The project was completed in the summer of 1966 under the general direction of James C. Massey, then the Chief of HABS; Ralph Schwarz of the Ford Foundation; and Architect John C. Waite (Columbia University); with assistant architects Christopher Benninger (Harvard University), Richard Haines (University of Kentucky), and Andrew Craig Morrison (University of Michigan), and architectural historian David T. VanZanten (Harvard University), at the HABS Field Office in Southport, Connecticut. The data was prepared and edited in HABS Washington office in December 1978 by Jan E. Cigliano, staff historian. Photographs were taken by HABS staff photographer Jack E. Boucher in September 1966.